

### **Radio Remarks on Voluntary National Testing for Basic Education Skills**

*October 20, 1997*

A new study released by the Department of Education today confirms what most of us knew instinctively already: Students, especially low income students, who challenge themselves with rigorous math and science courses in high school are much more likely to go on to college.

I've worked hard to make college affordable for all Americans. Our increased Pell grants and work-study positions, the new HOPE scholarship tax credits for the first 2 years of college, and other tax credits in education IRA's for the remaining years, graduate school, and other training, all these will truly open the doors of college to all who are willing to work for it.

We've addressed the economic barriers. Now we have to tackle the academic ones. While the studies show that taking algebra in middle school was essential to preparing for advanced math and science classes, just 25 percent of our eighth graders took algebra in 1996. We must do better. That's why I call upon all Americans to support our voluntary national tests for fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math, to ensure that all our children meet the high standards of academic excellence they'll need to succeed in tomorrow's world. Our math test will make sure our children master algebra and prepare for math and science courses that lead to college.

I call upon Congress to end the delays. Our children are counting on us.

NOTE: This address was recorded at 9:43 a.m. on October 17 in Room 2233 at the Sheraton Hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for later domestic broadcast, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 20.

### **Remarks on the America Reads Initiative**

*October 21, 1997*

Thank you very much. Secretary Riley, Dr. Corrigan, Senator Kennedy, Senator Specter, Congressmen Etheridge and Miller and Hoyer. And I thank the Members of Con-

gress not here in both parties who support this program.

Thank you, Eric Castillo, for what you do and for representing a new generation of American college students, I believe among the most idealistic and community service-oriented young people we have ever had in the colleges and universities of this country—and a rebuke to the superficial and downright wrong characterizations of Generation X as not caring about the future of this country. And I thank you for that.

And thank you, Victoria, for reading the book with me and making me look good. *[Laughter]* You did an excellent job. Her mother is here. I'd like to ask her mother to stand. Thank you very much for coming. *[Applause]* And they did a great job. Thank you. I thank all the other young students and all the other college students who are here, and a special word of thanks to all the college and university presidents who have joined us today.

We have just seen a concrete and, I thought, very moving example of the difference reading can make in the lives of our children. We also ought to remember the difference that this can make in the future of our country as we move into a new century and a very different time.

In the last 5 years, together we have done a lot to prepare our country for the 21st century: a new economic policy that works, a new crime policy that works, a new welfare reform policy that works, expanding health care coverage to our children, improving the environment, now opening the doors of college to all who are willing to work for it. But to fundamentally succeed in having an America where opportunity is open to everyone who will work for it and where everyone can be a part of a thriving American community, we must give all our children the world's best education.

By the year 2000, we should succeed in seeing that every 8-year-old can read independently, that every 12-year-old can log onto the Internet, that every 18-year-old can go on to college, and that every adult in our country can continue to learn for a lifetime.

We have made historic progress toward these goals. Last summer's balanced budget contained the biggest increased investment